



Strategy * Content Development * Storytelling

Analyst Briefing or Analyst Inquiry?

One of the most valuable programs a Public Relations practitioner can develop on behalf of a client is a well thought out Analyst Relations Program. Much like advertising, A/R is a long-term commitment. It's about building an ongoing relationship with the analysts covering your particular technology niche. Since many technologists aren't familiar with Analyst Relations, this short article should provide a good baseline understanding of the value and the difference between a "Vendor Briefing" and an "Analyst Inquiry."

Market analysts are expert in their coverage areas. One of the ways they stay on top of trends and innovation is to engage in vendor briefings with leaders and emerging leaders in their fields. There is no cost for vendor briefings beyond the work of your PR consultant or staff person, but there is also no obligation for an analyst to take a briefing request.

Vendor Briefing

No contract required

- Purpose is to inform the analysts & create a favorable impression
- OK to ask questions but analysts will limit the scope of what they share with you
- Typically 60 minutes
- Annual briefings should be planned, though twice/yearly briefings (when possible and with key new developments) is best.
- Vendor briefings can result in an invitation to participate in a research report even if the company is not a client of the firm.
- Analysts want to be briefed in advance of new product introductions and other key news – 6 weeks advance is ideal.
- Once contact is initiated, companies should share key press announcements and provide quarterly updates (new customer wins, participation in key events, etc.) via email in the absence of a formal briefing.

Analyst Inquiry

Contract required

- Customers create their own agenda to help analysts understand how they can assist: understand competitive landscape, refine pricing strategy, understand market trends, suggest and often broker partnerships.
- Companies engaging analysts in a contract can also request quotes to include in their press releases. Analysts won't endorse a product but can provide trend and market stats to support the announcement.
- While analysts won't share specific competitive information they will use all of their knowledge to help guide companies to attain a better market position and/or help guide product development to attain that result.
- As much information as possible should be provided in advance of the inquiry with clear goals and objectives to obtain the desired guidance.

Analysts get many vendor briefing requests and therefore it's important that there is a key piece of news associated with the briefing content to get on the calendar – new company launch, new software release, big customer implementation, etc. These briefings help analysts stay on top of who key players are in the market and often result in a company being included in a research report which is then shared with clients as part of their market research and also made available for purchase by non-clients.

Enterprise customers of key analyst firms rely on analyst feedback and research reports to make important buy decisions. It is the analyst knowledge and insight that these customers invest in and rely upon. However, analysts play a larger influencing role and while the reports that they generate are very valuable, only 20% of their knowledge winds up in such reports. The rest is in their head. This is why, if a company can afford the investment, engaging in an analyst contract is so valuable as often you can have unlimited access via phone in addition to structured inquiry sessions.

You don't have to have a contract with a firm to request and hold a vendor briefing. And while the main purpose of a vendor briefing is for the company to inform the analysts about their company, technology, and customers, the dialog also provides an opportunity to ask questions from the analysts.

Analysts will answer with the level of detail they feel comfortable imparting without a contract in place. Both analysts and vendors play a valuable role in the information ecosystem that technologists and business leaders rely on for making the crucial digital transformation decisions facing them today.